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Mightier than the Sword

*After 25
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Harry Rositzke knows that if he hadn't spent 25 years as an officer in the CIA, he might now be branded a "pinko" or a product of "Soviet disinformation."

But with impeccable credentials as the first CIA officer to run espionage operations against the Soviet Union, Rositzke speaks his mind without fear. In 1970 Rositzke retired to his farm in Middleburg, Va. to read, to think and to write. His most recent book is *Managing Moscow: Guns or Goods?*

"After 25 years of 'fighting the Russians' in the CIA, and 10 years on a Virginia hilltop watching detente slide into confrontation," Rositzke writes, "it is my conviction that the long-term Soviet threat to the American interest is not military but political and economic."

As Rositzke sees it, the U.S. mistakenly continues "to stick to the outworn formula of buying our security and our interests abroad with guns—and more guns. We respond manfully to the Soviet military threat with more and better missiles, with a rapid deployment force, with Pershing missiles to Western Europe....And yet, with all our muscle, we are unable to diminish the threat of Soviet power. We have been reduced, from Afghanistan on, to punishing the Russians for their actions. And punishment, we have learned, does not deter."

His solution: a forward American economic strategy. It's time for the U.S. to use its economic clout to stop the Russian advance in the developing world. By fully using our technology, our productive capacity, our grain and the American dollar to advance our security and prosperity, Rositzke believes we would be using the one weapon in which we are far superior to the Soviet Union.

CC: You have a degree from Harvard in German linguistics and you taught at Harvard, the University of Omaha and the University of Rochester. So how did an academic like you get involved in intelligence operations?

ROSITZKE: I got started during World War II. I was handling all the agent reports from Western Europe, France and the lowlands before D-Day and that got me immediately into the business of seeing what secret agents could contribute. Some of these people contributed greatly in terms of reporting the movement of German divisions to the beachheads before and after the invasion. I think probably the real reason I stayed

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on [after the war and joined the CIA] was because I became fascinated by the Russians.

CC: *So you've been with the CIA since it was started in 1947?*

ROSITZKE: Yes, I was the first chief of the Soviet Operations Division. Our main job in 1948 was to find out what was going on inside of Russia because everyone from the president on down was concerned about a Soviet military move from Eastern to Western Europe. Because the Soviet Union is totally cut off from the world (our embassy people couldn't even walk outside the embassy until 1953 when Stalin died), there was only one way to find out what was going on and that was to [parachute in] agents who were trained and equipped with radio sets to report back.

CC: *But in the later years following the war, didn't you also try to place agents within the Soviet government?*

ROSITZKE: That's probably one of the most difficult operating jobs in the world. I don't think there's any question [about it], there's no great mole in Moscow.

CC: *By "mole," you mean...*

ROSITZKE: Upper level member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Politburo—any more than there is a Soviet mole in the White House or in the National Security Council.

CC: *How many CIA agents do we have in the Soviet Union?*

ROSITZKE: That's a highly classified point. Are you working for the KGB?

CC: *So how does the U.S. government get most of its information about the Soviet Union?*

ROSITZKE: The main thing that kept Washington informed between 1956 and 1960 was the U2 flights. Since then, the overhead satellite photography and electronic surveillance provide [information about] absolutely everything visible or hearable. And as you know, that's pretty crucial because that's the only way you can verify arms agreements in a second. Electronic observers can pick up a Soviet pilot talking to his base. They can pick up all long distance calls, any of the radio transmissions. They can pick up anything. They aren't, however, much good [at detecting] military research handled under a roof.

CC: *You mean we don't have at least half the Soviet Union bugged?*

ROSITZKE: The KGB [domestic operation is] 200 times as large—oh, more than that—as the FBI. And it has very good control of the law and behavior of its citizens. It's a security service that practically guarantees you aren't going

to have a [U.S.] agent [there]. The United States is a very easy area to operate in because we are a different kind of society. The Russians have over 300 KGB guys in New York who can operate with total freedom. The FBI tries to follow as many of them as possible. But if you want to follow a man for 24 hours, it takes eight people.

CC: *Obviously, as a former CIA officer, you have learned a lot about the Soviet Union and its people. What do you think is our biggest misunderstanding about the Soviet people?*

ROSITZKE: They are people; they are married; they have children. A lot of them live in villages because, after all, almost everyone in the Soviet Union is either a peasant, the son of a peasant or the grandson of a peasant.

I [also] think—and this is strictly my personal impression—that Americans have an idea that everyone in the Soviet Union is a communist, which of course they are not. The Communist Party is a fairly elite organization, and you damn well better be good before they let you into it. Second, [Americans seem to believe] that Soviets are slaves who go around in perpetual fear, which is nonsense. [Americans seem to believe] that the average Russian wants "freedom," when the average Russian has never had freedom and doesn't know what it really means and very often is suspicious of it. Because if you are bred into a society of rules and regulations and suddenly wake up one morning and you can do anything you want to, that's a threat.

CC: *But are they also part of what President Reagan has called an "evil empire?"*

ROSITZKE: Well, even Reagan never said that.

CC: *He referred to the government as evil.*

ROSITZKE: So are we talking about a couple of thousand people in Moscow or are we talking about 262 million people living in a vast territory of different languages? They are two different things. [Yet even] the [government] bureaucrats, high bureaucrats, are trained in a fairly narrow way. Most know very little about the outside world but are terribly concerned about the security of their country, about the efficiency of their country. This idea of considering them all minor Satans, as though they were in the clutch of the devil, is primarily the product of the American imagination. Not [all] Americans, but two people. John Foster Dulles was the first one to promote this

whole thing of what I call a moral and religious crusade. And President Reagan came in and, in somewhat simpler language, did the same thing.

CC: *Isn't American policy based on the premise that the Soviet Union wants to bury us and if given a chance, they will put their troops on U.S. soil and make us communists?*

ROSITZKE: It's such a ludicrous, stupid affair. In 35 years they have never sent their troops outside their border areas.

CC: *What about Afghanistan?*

ROSITZKE: I said, "outside their border areas." Afghanistan is along their border. In all my years in government—this is something so simple, it really has to be made clear—in all my years in government and since, I have never seen an intelligence estimate that shows how it would be profitable to Soviet interests to invade Western Europe or to attack the United States. There is no rationale for it. They are mainly concerned with becoming stronger to withstand the American threat which is obviously greater than the Soviet threat is to us. For 35 years we have had bases all around the Soviet Union. We encircled the Soviet Union because we were afraid they were going to expand their power by military means.

No one has ever suggested that the Russians somehow or other will try to take over the U.S. They would need five million troops—they don't even have that many. Do they have a couple of million English speakers to take the place of the FBI? It's all so ridiculous.

CC: *Then why are we so afraid of them?*

ROSITZKE: Because we have a leader who has a real deep emotional fear and hatred of the Russians, of communism. It's that little thing in the American stomach that says, "this is the devil."

Reagan's honest; he really believes all this. But then all you have to do is look at [the others]—Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, certainly Nixon. Although Nixon was an anti-communist in the gut, he realized it wouldn't make any sense to just keep on spouting anti-communist rhetoric when the Soviets were getting stronger. [He knew] we really had to get together to reduce the threat on both sides.

CC: *So if you were president of the United States, what would you be doing? Would you be building the MX missile?*

ROSITZKE: I wouldn't build the MX missile, and I certainly wouldn't get into the star wars business. The rationale for that is really rather childish. I would see to it that our armed forces were ready to

take care of [hot spots such as the Persian Gulf area...while negotiating with the Soviets to reduce our strategic missiles]. In other words, I think we are spending half a trillion dollars to no good end. That to me is the tragedy of my generation. I think we are off on one of the most wasteful episodes in American society, all because of a feeling in the gut. We are suckers for a paranoid approach to the Russians. I'm not saying they are not a threat in the long run. I happen to think they are mainly a political and economic threat.

CC: *You say in your book that we have been fighting the Russians on their strongest front—military power—and that we have failed to fight them on their weakest front—economic power. Are you saying they outsmarted us? Was this their plan all along?*

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ROSITZKE: No! We "dumbed" ourselves! No, they are not very smart. They are going about their business in a simple way. Every year they are producing more goods; they are getting a more secure society and military; and they have been prospering. [At the same time] we have been sacrificing a great deal of our wealth, brains and so forth on our own battlefield. I'm a strong believer in deterrence [each side having enough weapons to deter the other from attacking], but I think that's enough. Next, [you reduce weapons on both sides] and then get to work on the work of the world.

CC: *What is the Soviets' objective if it isn't to take over the world?*

ROSITZKE: In the long run if the Russians can increase their power and influence—this is through diplomacy and every-

thing else—and gain further anchors and points of support in Africa and Southeast Asia, Indonesia and South America, they can thereby curtail more and more of the power of the United States and in the long run decrease its capability of being a threat to the Soviet Union. In other words, it's not much boom boom because they know as well as we that if there is much boom boom, we're both through—so let's not be nonsensical about it.

You know, they have worked awfully hard for 60 to 70 years to build a society. It's not terribly good yet, but they certainly aren't going to take a gamble on dropping some missiles across the Arctic or taking their tanks into Western Europe when this could lead to the destruction of their society. That's what I meant when I said they are human. They are very pragmatic people.

CC: *If building more bombs and missiles isn't the answer, what is? What should we be doing?*

ROSITZKE: We should reduce the alliance between Moscow's foreign allies by economic and political means. And that has plenty of sentiment on Capitol Hill, too. We could get Cuba and Castro "on our side" with a year of decent diplomacy and, of course, trading back and forth. We could probably even get Cuban troops out of Africa a hell of a lot more efficiently than by saying we won't talk to you until you get your troops out of Africa.

When it comes to the [East] European bloc, there isn't any question they will always remain under the military superiority of the Soviet Union just as Nicaragua is. But we can assist those peoples' degree of prosperity, which by definition gives them a certain degree of independence from Moscow's dictates. Hungary is the best example [of this kind of policy].

We know that we cannot maintain our [own] prosperity without selling a great many goods abroad. We need a really forward looking policy; we need to start looking at crucial possible markets. I happen to consider Indonesia a rather crucial part of Asia. Brazil is really the crux country in Latin America. Angola, Nigeria [are also important]. We need to start taking positive, forward steps toward developing friendly and economic relations with them...so that we have an increasingly friendly environment for U.S. interests on every continent. That's the future. We want to have the world profit us? Good, let's do something about it.